

# CHILD STUDY

## Why Do Parents Need Special Training?

*A Symposium by*

Miriam Van Waters  
E. R. and G. H. Groves  
William H. Kilpatrick

Jessie Taft  
Smiley Blanton  
Helen T. Woolley



*Published by*

Child Study Association of America, Inc.  
*formerly Federation for Child Study*

October



1925

## CONTENTS—OCTOBER, 1923

	PAGE
Why Do Parents Need Special Training?	
Mistakes Could be Prevented.....	3
By Miriam Van Waters	
Child Life is Precious.....	4
By William H. Kilpatrick	
Instinct Is Not Enough.....	4
By Ernest R. and Gladys H. Groves	
The Child Learns Most Through Daily Con- tacts .....	5
By Smiley Blanton, M.D.	
The Parent Has the Strategic Position....	5
By Helen T. Woolley, Ph.D.	
Social Progress Begins and Ends in the Home .....	11
By Jessie Taft	
What Mothers Want to Know.....	7
By Sidonie M. Gruenberg	
The Training of Parents.....	9
By Helen A. Storey	
Editorial—Our Conference .....	6

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**The Child Study Association of America, Inc.**

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Vol. 2

October 1925

No. 7

## Why Do Parents Need Special Training?

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### *Mistakes Could Be Prevented*

By Miriam Van Waters

A PUBLIC health nurse brought the case of an eight months old baby to the Juvenile Court for protection. The child weighed ten pounds. No one would have believed it was eight months old. It was wrinkled, emaciated, and entirely helpless. The mother was a gentle woman who refused to feed it anything but orange juice. She was studying a new health fad and living on orange juice herself. The court explained to the mother that she was starving her child to death.

"But she is never sick," said the mother. "She never cries."

"But she will never grow up," said the court. "She is as tiny as a two weeks old infant."

"I know that," said the mother, "but I like a small baby." To this mother that was the end of the argument.

She loved her child, she devoted herself to it, and she believed she had the right to treat it as she liked because it was hers.

In physical matters child welfare experts have won the right to secure legal protection for children because we have gained standards of the minimum essentials of physical well-being. Most

parents submit their individual opinions to the guidance of those who know about health. In social or ethical matters there is no agreement among parents as to how children should be trained. We have as yet no fixed standards but they are gradually being formed. Parents need education in order that they may understand the social and mental needs of young human beings.

Nature equips parents with only one prerequisite for successful child rearing—affection. They know nothing of the child's inner growth, his struggles, conflicts and

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goals. Hence they are constantly making mistakes. Children develop antagonism, nervous and mental disorders, they become retarded in school, or are troublesome in the community and are labeled delinquent. How much of this misery we could prevent if parents were informed of the exceeding delicate and sensitive organisms of their children and were trained to treat them properly we can only guess. But this question of parental education is the most important matter before civilization today.

### *Child Life Is Precious*

By William H. Kilpatrick

**C**HILD life is too sacred to spoil through parental blundering. There are many factory operators for whom a few weeks will suffice for their learning and if adequate guidance be available the loss through damaged product may be negligible. But not so with rearing children. It is complicated beyond all belief, and irreparable damage may be done while the parent learns through the costly method of trial and error.

Civilization has at length accumulated some reliable knowledge on the subject of child rearing. In the physical realm much is known. In the matter of character building we have a considerable body of information that promises to shorten the learning period for parents and to save from some of the otherwise likely disasters to childhood. To refuse now to acquire and use this available body of knowledge is to come perilously close to criminal carelessness. Here as elsewhere ignorance is now no excuse.

For parents to come together in groups to study the proper care of children has good attendant effects. The problem gains standing in the community. So long as parents merely take things to heart at home, no one knows. The influence on others is small. But to have a study group meet in the neighborhood is to advertise the idea. Still again, the actual meeting helps. The interchange of ideas here as always both stimulates thought and corrects its vagaries. Better thinking is bound to result. And not only is thought thus helped, but better attitudes are built. To hear how others look on the problem may well be the needed stimulus to build the attitude of intelligent care. Mother love of itself is not sufficient. Love needs intelligence to guide its care aright.

### *Instinct Is Not Enough*

By Ernest R. and Gladys H. Groves

**I**T is hard to get away from the notion that natural kindliness and general education will enable any ordinarily intelligent parents to deal wisely with their children. But the comment of mature parents who have brought up their children to the entrance upon adulthood is, "We wish we had been able to get help when we were just starting with our young children. It would have saved us a good deal of worry and many mistakes that came from our lack of understanding."

The other morning at the breakfast table a father who stands high in his profession scolded his sensitive eight-year-old daughter at such length and with so much force that the casual visitor in the house was greatly disturbed, though this guest was a young man who does not like children. The misdeed that brought such a tirade upon the little girl's head was just the act of getting up a little earlier than her carefully regulated schedule permitted. The onlooker, who saw the sunny child become more and more upset under her father's angry words, felt that the parental outburst had tired the child far more than the possible loss of a few minutes' sleep.

In the opposite direction runs the harmful influence of thoughtless kindness to one's children. A lack of independence that persists well into the years of maturity, selfishness, and the inability to build up a happy family life of their own because of their over-developed craving for the protection of mother-love or father-love—these are some of the legacies bequeathed by unduly affectionate parents to their children.

These mistakes that the most conscientious and good-hearted parent can not avoid may at least be lessened in number and seriousness by a study of the root causes underlying common parental blunders and a clear understanding of the purpose and aims of parental control of young children and adolescents. When each of us tries out a hit or miss course for himself in handling his children, it is apt to be a long time before the evidence of mismanagement begins to show. It is only the trained eye that can easily detect the signs of trouble in a child's life when the disturbance is fresh and can most thoroughly be uprooted. Of course the trained parent makes mistakes in the way he meets the problems that arise in child care, but he is often able to recognize almost immediately that he has acted unwisely



and therefore can guard against the repetition of his error, or take pains to counteract its effect.

The parent who has been trained to look for causes and recognize their results in the everyday occurrences of family life is quick to appreciate the danger of a child's becoming distrustful of his own powers when he hears a brother or sister constantly praised while he does not succeed in getting much applause for what he does; this parent looks for something praiseworthy in the achievements of the less brilliant child and deftly expresses his admiration for what he finds, thus encouraging the child to greater feats, with a wholesome increase of self-confidence.

The parent who wishes practical help has a decided advantage today because of the splendid contributions that are coming from various sciences that deal with young children, particularly the sciences of psychology and sociology. Much of this material is very recent and all of it is greatly needed, since parenthood, like other positions of responsibility, must advance its efficiency to keep pace with the constantly increasing complexity of the life we now live. What would have been good parenthood in the past is no longer capable of meeting the tests of practical worth. A better type of family life must now be maintained, or relatively family life will fall behind hygiene, teaching, and other activities influencing the child that are becoming more efficient and scientific.

### *The Child Learns Most Through Daily Contacts*

By Smiley Blanton, M.D.

I RECENTLY overheard the following conversation between a matron, the wife of a university professor and mother of four children, and an expectant mother:

Expectant Mother: "How shall I know what to do for my baby when it comes? I shall never know whether or not I have the right amount of clothes on it. I shall be helpless when it has the colic."

Matron: "My dear, all this knowledge will come to you with the birth of the baby."

Such mid-Victorian sentimentality is no longer accepted by modern mothers. They know that they must read books and get advice from their physician in order to give their children the proper physical care. But it is not generally recognized that the psychological care requires even more training than does the physical care.

"What shall I do with my child, who has temper tantrums, who will refuse to go to bed when he is told, who tells fibs, who takes small sums of money, who is aggressive, negative, seclusive?" These and many other problems can only be properly handled by a parent who has had definite instructions concerning the developmental tendencies and capacities of the child.

The child is born with certain reaction tendencies, but these are modified and overlaid during the very early years through habits. These habits are not formed through formal training, but develop as the child comes in contact with his physical and psychological environment. Knowledge and truth do not come to the child at dramatic moments, but come to it through little daily, and often overlooked, contacts.

Psychiatrists who work with children realize that fully three-fourths of the behavior problems they deal with are due to unwise training in the home. This does not mean that the parents are in any way at all to blame—because most of them do the very best they can; it merely shows that parents need definite and specific training in handling the developing emotional life of their children.

Many of the emotional difficulties in children that are considered quite normal we now recognize to be the beginning of serious maladjustments. Parents must be trained to recognize these beginning signs of maladjustment and know how to handle them.

### *The Parent Has the Strategic Position*

By Helen T. Woolley, Ph.D.

ONE might just as well inquire why the teacher needs to be educated. The education of the child which takes place in the home is of an even more fundamental and determining nature than the education which takes place in the school. We are just becoming vividly aware of the fact that by the time a child enters school at five or six years of age, the trend of his body, his mind, and his social self is already set. Needless to say, the "set" can be changed somewhat by re-education, but the result is never as fine as though there had been no need for change.

What seems to need explanation is not why the parent needs educating, but why we ever supposed that he didn't need educating. The parent's concern over the child's hunger, and his intense desire to feed it, does not teach him what food to

(Continued on page 11)



## CHILD STUDY

*published by*

**Child Study Association of America, Inc.**

*formerly Federation for Child Study*

*Headquarters*

54 W. 74th St.

New York City

*Extension Office*

509 W. 121st St.

### EDITORS

ALMA L. BINZEL  
SIDONIE MATSNER GRUENBERG  
MARION M. MILLER

CECILE PILPEL  
JANE H. POSNER  
HELEN A. STOREY

CORA FLUSSER, *Business Manager*

Vol. 2

Subscription \$1.00 a year

No. 7

## Our Conference

It becomes increasingly evident that educators and sociologists are seriously looking to the home as the real centre of education and the parent as the teacher who has the unique advantage of early and constant companionship with the child. They are discovering that in the early years, before the school takes possession of the child and when the parents hold full sway, the "set" of his whole life is made.

Parents themselves are waking up to their responsibilities and the strategic nature of their position. They are cooperating more and more closely with the schools; they are appealing for advice in greater and greater numbers to clinics, consultation centres, and other agencies of child-knowledge. They are puzzled over the health, the tantrums, the fears, the sex-knowledge of their children. Some are parents of healthy, normal children who simply want to get an estimate of their child's ability and expert advice concerning his education. All are reaching out for the knowledge of child nature which science has gained.

How are the demands of these far-seeing sociologists for wider diffusion of knowledge among parents concerning the child being answered? How are the problems of these individual mothers and fathers being met? A survey of the field of education for parents discloses many promising beginnings by state, national and local organizations. They are working to increase the body of knowledge concerning childhood and to present it in a form which parents can use. But too often these organizations do not have the mechanism of free interchange of experience and findings.

The Conference of the Child Study Association, called for October 26 to 28, hopes to bring to-

gether the agencies working in the field of child life, to clarify and present their findings and to provide a chance for the interchange of experience. It hopes to inspire and stimulate new projects of research into childhood and new methods of passing on the knowledge we already have to fathers and mothers who need it.

Out of thirty-seven years of experience with study groups of parents and teachers, the Child Study Association feels that it has a contribution to make in the technique and materials of child study. For this reason it has planned a ten-day Institute to follow the Conference, for the special purpose of a short but intensive training for those who have a practical interest in the study-group method of educating parents.

Fathers, mothers, teachers, social workers—everyone interested in the child—are invited to attend the meetings of the Conference and take an active part in its discussions.

## The Annual Dinner

The climax of the Conference will be a Dinner in the Grand Ball Room of Hotel Waldorf Astoria on October 28th. The speakers will be Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Miriam Van Waters and Dr. C. W. Kimmins. Professor David Saville Muzzey will be chairman. It is hoped that this will be a representative social gathering of the members of the Child Study Association and all others who are interested in the relationship between the parent and the child. Tickets may be obtained by writing to the Child Study Association at 54 West 74th Street, New York City.

## This Month's Contributors

**Dr. Smiley Blanton** is Director of the Child Guidance Clinic of the Board of Education, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Ernest R. and Gladys H. Groves** are joint authors of "Wholesome Childhood." Dr. Ernest H. Groves is professor of social science at Boston University and author of "Personality and Social Adjustment."

**Dr. William H. Kilpatrick** is professor in philosophy of education at Columbia University. He is author of "Horace Mann Studies in Primary Education", "The Project Method", "Source Book in the Philosophy of Education", etc.

**Jessie Taft** is Director, Girls' Aid, Philadelphia, Pa., and author of "Some Problems in Delinquency", etc.

**Miriam Van Waters** is Referee of the Juvenile Court, Los Angeles, Cal., and author of "Youth in Conflict."

**Dr. Helen T. Woolley** is Director of the Merrill-Palmer School and author of "The Mental Traits of Sex" and "Readings in Vocational Guidance", etc.



# What Parents Want to Know

By Sidonie M. Gruenberg

**T**HOUSANDS of parents—fathers as well as mothers—are keenly aware of their own inability to manage the serious task of rearing children. There are at hand hundreds of letters that express this realization; and it comes to the surface again and again in conferences, interviews and meetings of many kinds.

One mother, after some hesitation, finally writes, "I am a young mother and you will laugh at my questions." She seems to feel that those others, the older ones, are much wiser; but alas, *they* know only too well that they are lacking, too, for they come with similar problems, and similar worries.

The mother who writes the letter from which the following is taken is representative of vast numbers who would not know how to say it so well: "I feel at times as if I should never have had children; I seem so helpless when it comes to training them. All my love, kindness, patience and firmness do not seem to work." Some complain that no amount of "punishment" seems to work, either. One declares that she does indeed succeed in making her child do her bidding—sometimes at the cost of hours of struggle—but her conscience troubles her. Is she doing the right thing to "break the will" of the child? Is it worth the cost? Will not the child outgrow his stubbornness or his thumb-sucking, without all the struggle? Are these methods helping toward growth and development?

From farms and villages, from tenements and fine homes in large cities, we get exactly the same kinds of problems, the same kinds of helplessness. The restless activity of young children is one source of annoyance. Common observation has for ages found this trait to be characteristic of all normal children; yet today the young mother has to learn it all over again.

"What can you expect of a two-year-old boy?" writes a worried parent. "These are a few of the naughty things I have not been able to conquer. He plays with things on the table. He takes off his slippers. He opens the icebox door." Between the lines of this letter you read plainly enough that the mother is spending much of her thought scheming out ways for making the child

stop, instead of finding ways of keeping him occupied.

Young parents—and older ones, too—have to learn that the impulses which the child manifests through these "naughty" acts are in themselves neither naughty nor undesirable. On the contrary, they are the very sources of his ability to learn anything at all in life. It is by handling things, whether on the table or elsewhere, that the child becomes acquainted with the materials and objects of the world in which he has to live. He will take off his slippers, of course, because, apparently, there is nothing more interesting to do. His interest in taking them off might be used as part of the game through which he will shortly learn to dress and undress himself. His curiosity will lead him to explore the inside of the icebox or any other closed receptacle; or the swinging door has a fascination because it is something to work. Can the mother not find other boxes for him to explore, other ways of exercising his curiosity? Are there not other things besides the icebox door that *work*, so that the child may get from them the satisfaction of making the hard insensate world do his bidding? It is only so that she can get this troublesome two-year-old grow into a less troublesome and more self-reliant, more skillful, more understanding three-year-old. His curiosity and his desire to control are of the very essence of his human-ness, and are to be "conquered" only at a tremendous loss.

The question of obedience comes up again and again, in queries like this: "I have two boys, aged two and one-half and four years, both normal and healthy. I try not to ask or tell them to do too many different things, but it is most annoying to have them persist in handling things when I say, 'Please leave that alone.' They also want to argue and are often impudent and rude if they aren't allowed to do as they want to. I know I am to blame for all of it as I have spoken crossly and impatiently to them, but it is hard to be patient when they are so noisy and do so many things I don't want them to do."

This question is typical of those that arise in large part from our changing ideals and conditions of life. It was a comparatively simple matter



in a bygone age to insist upon implicit obedience from earliest childhood and throughout later childhood, since continuous obedience was the normal lot of masses of people. Today, however, we have an idea that the individual has to be trained to exercise his individuality and initiative, that he is to live as a free personality among other free men and women. And for parents there is a constant conflict and uncertainty. If the child is to be free, he must learn to use freedom; and the restraints and coercions of the older discipline seem incompatible with freedom. Here is where parents need to learn some very definite principles of life and conduct in childhood.

There is no necessary conflict between freedom and discipline if we are clear in our own minds as to what we wish to attain. We may reject altogether the notion that obedience is in itself a virtue to the cultivated as of permanent value; and yet we may use it in leading the child to freedom. Freedom, in the same way, is not a negative condition but something to be achieved by the growing personality, through much effort and with much help from the parents and from others. The mother needs to learn to think of the child as acquiring self control and self direction through the guidance and counsel he receives, through the illuminating and stimulating experiences that he has. She must know when to expect obedience from the young child, who is not yet able to direct and decide for himself; and she must know how to get him into the habit of obeying not her word or any external authority, but eventually his own inner approval and command.

Again, the question of punishment comes up. "My child is five years old. . . . I can scold and threaten with everything, he won't pay any attention to me until I get a switch to whip him with, then he will mind for a minute, but soon forgets it. A whipping doesn't do him any good, so that kind of punishment doesn't work."

The parent needs to learn the place of rewards and punishment in the process of spiritual development. There has been a reaction against corporal punishment, in keeping not alone with broadening sympathies and kindness, but also with a growing realization of the futility—or worse—of the more brutal forms of control. A mother who seems to manage many of the chil-

dren's problems well enough, nevertheless asks, "Is there not a kinder way of getting these results?" We must learn what these kinder ways are; and what is still more important, we must learn that "these results" that the older methods brought included the serious but overlooked by-products of hatred and fear and continuing brutality; that in general, punishment teaches children to avoid getting caught much more than to avoid the disapproved conduct.

"My boy is four and one-half years old and very inquisitive," writes another mother. "His most persistent question is 'Where do babies come from?' I do not believe in telling the fairy tale about the stork. He has the impression now that the doctor brings them, but wants to know where he gets them. Now I do not know just how to go about explaining the mystery of life, as I do not want to disregard the truth entirely."

Mothers are wise who begin thus early to establish a basis of truth and understanding between themselves and their children. Such mothers soon learn that the truth, naturally and casually told, is just as easily and simply accepted by children as any fiction which may be substituted for it, and they have the advantage of never having to retract a false statement. Sometimes parents have to revise their own ideas and information concerning sex before they can speak of it simply and accurately to their children. Books and articles on the origin of life, together with discussions in study groups have been of much use toward this end.

The child who cries too much, the child who runs away, the child who stammers—all are described again and again in the letters in which troubled mothers appeal to us for help. Each child brings his own special problems, and yet there are general principles which help in deciding on what procedure to take. To put mothers and fathers everywhere in touch with the knowledge which they need is an urgent task that needs careful working out.

#### FOR NOVEMBER CHILD STUDY

Dr. David Mitchell, consulting psychologist and president of the New York Association of Consulting Psychologists, will write an article on "The Fears of Childhood". Dr. Mitchell is to lead a conference on Fear on January 17, 1925.



# The Training of Parents

## *What is Being Done in a New Educational Field*

By Helen A. Storey

UNTIL recently parents have learned how to bring up their children chiefly through the slow, uncertain process of experience against a background of tradition. Ideas of the nature and needs of the child have come to a few mothers and fathers through the channels of books, lecture and discussion groups, but the great majority have had no special training to help them with their relationships with their children, even though they were often troubled with questions they could not solve. In health matters it is now possible to get advice from both state and national governments, but for advice and knowledge in questions of child behavior the average parent has had nowhere to turn.

Now this need for providing special training for parents is being recognized by different groups and organizations all over the country. Conspicuous among these are the state universities of the west—Iowa, Minnesota, Utah, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Oregon, not to mention the state of Colorado with its proposed law for the compulsory education of parents; and, in the east, Columbia, Cornell, Yale, Georgia State College of Agriculture, Boston University and Vassar College.

National organizations, including the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the American Association of University Women are taking up the work of increasing the knowledge of childhood and educating parents. The Child Study Association, formerly the Federation for Child Study, has for thirty-five years or more been demonstrating with a few groups of parents what might be done for the many in the diffusion of knowledge about the child.

Privately endowed foundations, too, are working in the field of parental education. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial has by generous contributions increased the efficiency of several organizations already active in studying childhood and educating parents. The Children's Foundation at Valparaiso, Indiana, is, in its own words, "a public-service institution established for the study of child life and for the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to the well-being and education of children." The Merrill-Palmer school in Detroit was founded with a legacy of \$3,000,000 for the purpose of training girls for motherhood.

The project of educating parents divides itself into four branches: first, research into childhood to find new facts; second, the preparation of teaching material; third, the training of leaders; and fourth, the actual dissemination of knowledge directly among parents.

Research into childhood has concerned itself so far largely with the early years, both because this is the time when home makes the strongest impression upon the child and because knowledge of the pre-school child has been fragmentary and incomplete. Nursery schools have been organized in different parts of the country, so that the behavior of young children under prescribed conditions could be observed. The Merrill-Palmer School has established, in connection with its training course, one of the most notable of these laboratories. In this school of toddlers, students have been observing and collecting data concerning the psychology of child feeding, the psychology of sleep for young children, children's fears, standardization of tests for young children and other like problems. Four years ago the University of Iowa organized a pre-school laboratory for children from two to six and are adding another home laboratory school for children all day and a few mothers and babies during the night. The University of Minnesota, the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell, Yale, and Johns Hopkins, all have organized pre-schools for purposes of research. Results from these will be eagerly awaited. But research should also be established in the home, and the American Association of University Women is taking a step in this direction by recommending that college women be trained to make objective observations and careful records of the behavior of their children at home, developing record sheets and trying out remedial measures and recording their results.

To take the body of knowledge we have and prepare from it teaching material adapted to the needs of mothers and fathers and those who work with them is another needed process of parental education. The Child Study Association has made a beginning with its manual, "Outlines of Child Study", and its series of pamphlets on Obedience, Punishment, Fear, Truth and Falsehood, and other subjects connected with child-



training. The Children's Foundation has produced a book called "The Child, His Nature and His Needs" to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and every-day practice. The National Committee for Mental Hygiene has published a series of leaflets on Habit Training for Children, written by Dr. D. A. Thom. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers publishes the Child-Welfare Magazine, which has, besides its articles, departments directed by different organizations working toward child welfare. But there still remains much to be done in the way of presenting scientific facts clearly and understandably to the average parent.

The training of group leaders and others who come into contact with the parent in an educational way, such as visiting teachers and public health nurses, is one of the chief necessities in the work of educating parents. Such training demands not only a thorough grounding in the principles of child psychology, but also some practical experience in laboratory and field work. Teachers College of Columbia University has a regular course for leaders in the education of parents, and the students in this course get practical experience in field work in the study groups of the Child Study Association. Other universities, such as Iowa, Minnesota and Cornell, have nursery schools for laboratories. A nursery school for this purpose has recently been established in connection with the Yale School of Nursing under Dr. Arnold Gesell. "We are convinced that no one can do health work who does not know normal children, who does not know how to get the child to do things, who does not know how to get the mother to get the child to do things," says Miss Amelia Grant, Assistant Professor of the School.

Training in the technique of forming study groups is necessary, of course, for leaders. For this special purpose the Child Study Association is holding a ten-day institute this fall in New York City.

When research, study materials, and leaders have been provided, the actual training of parents follows. One of the best ways so far found has been the study group method. Extension workers from different universities, such as Iowa, Oklahoma, Georgia State College of Agriculture and Cornell help organize classes of parents just as they have organized boys' and girls' clubs in the past. They work through school, church and local organizations in both city and country. Especially interesting is the extension work of the

University of Iowa, which is sending out trained workers to three different cities to establish demonstration centers of parental education.

The American Association of University Women is organizing study groups throughout the country dealing with the pre-school child. The Child Study Association carries on 68 active study groups and several associated ones. Other organizers and directors of study groups are the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Monmouth County (N. J.) Organization for Social Service, the Cooperative Education Association of Virginia and several local organizations, among which is the Parents' Council of Philadelphia.

For the parent who wants individual advice about a child there are consultation centres and clinics. These, although still in the experimental stage, are fast proving their usefulness. The Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency has tried out child guidance clinics in St. Louis, Norfolk and Dallas, handling all types of cases, from nervousness and difficulties about taking food to serious legal offenses, and coming to the conclusion that in most cases "the family drama" was a basic cause of the difficulty. The Merrill-Palmer School and the Institute of Child Welfare Research of Teachers College, Columbia University, maintain consultation centres, dealing with difficulties in conduct and backwardness in education. Many children, however, were brought to these clinics by alert and intelligent parents who wanted advice concerning education and an estimate of the child's ability. Habit clinics, headed by Dr. D. A. Thom, have been started in Boston under the auspices of the Community Health Association.

Mothers who have children in nursery schools often learn a great deal from observation and study classes in connection with the school. In Cornell University parents are asked to confer with the staff at least once a month or oftener if any problem develops. At the Judson Health Center in New York City the mother of every child in the nursery school is expected to attend classes in child care and home making regularly, and only children of cooperative members are allowed to attend.

Radio talks have been found by the Child Study Association an effective means of educating parents, and advice has been extended to parents through correspondence.

*(Continued on page 13)*



## WHY DO PARENTS NEED SPECIAL TRAINING?

(Continued from page 5)

provide to bring about the best physical growth and development of body of which the child is capable. The parent's intense emotional concern over the child's illness does not teach him how to prevent or to cure illness. For these functions knowledge is needed which can be acquired only in the course of systematic education.

In modern times, when the concerted effort of the family is no longer required for the mechanics of homemaking, the social atmosphere is more than ever the essence of the home. The atmosphere in which a well developed mind and a fine character are fostered is even more difficult to create than the physical conditions which promote fine bodily development. We have naively accepted human relationships as something which just happens because of the nature of things rather than as something capable of control through understanding. Science is beginning to formulate for us laws of mental development, and laws of the formation of social attitudes. Parents may begin to learn how to maintain respect for authority in children, and at the same time foster independence and initiative; how to surround a child with affection, and yet not spoil him; how to teach him to respect and value property, without overvaluing it; how to develop leadership without domineeringness; how to foster a spirit of cooperation, without subservience to the group; how to teach the lore of the past without quenching the spirit of independent thought.

The parent who expects to develop in his child the best type of character and personality of which the child is capable, must himself be educated in the laws of the human spirit. Ultimately all social progress depends upon improving the quality of the individual members of society. The parent occupies the strategic position in this endeavor.

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faced with certain hard unpleasant facts which gave us pause. First there was the enormous amount of time consumed in work on one person and the difficulty of knowing which individual would be able to gain insight and throw off some of the deeply ingrained habits and conditionings. Then there was no denying the failures which came in spite of our best efforts. We met conditions where the causes of the maladjustment were clearly traced back into the earliest years, but the task of reforming habits of mind and body, which had been established for twenty, thirty or forty years, seemed impossibly difficult for patient and worker.

Why, we said, should we wait so long to alter these attitudes and habits? Why should we not direct our attention to prevention, to the children who are still pliable and susceptible of training? And gradually we see the whole trend of psychiatric, psychological, educational and social case work interest moving back and back, through adolescence to childhood. This period is marked by the development of mental hygiene clinics in juvenile courts, the movement for the prevention of delinquency, the efforts to get at children through the public schools and the visiting teacher, the emphasis on experimental education as an adjusting as well as educative process, and finally the appearance of the Child Guidance Clinics with their elaborate equipment of psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric social workers devoted to the reeducation of problem children.

But the end is not yet. The arrow is still pointing backwards, and the pioneers in human behavior are already charting new paths into the undiscovered country of babyhood. The nursery school and the habit clinic for children of pre-school age are already established on the frontiers. What next, we say, as we pursue the sources of emotional maladjustment back into pre-natal life itself—what next? What should it be if not the parents and the family? How could we ever hope to handle the problem of human behavior except at its source, the cradle and the home? From the influence of the parents' relationship to each other, their attitudes toward their children, the atmosphere they provide, the training they give, the standards they set up, there is no escape for the little child. He must be molded in response to this situation; over it he has no control, by it his destiny is determined.

What, then, have we come to—the obvious, the trite, discovery that the home really is the center

of everything, the source of human behavior, the hope of its ultimate control. The only trouble is that with all of our sentimental thinking and talking about it, we haven't taken it half seriously enough and now science has come along to point out the way. We shall never get anywhere in our quest for prevention of delinquency, unhappiness, emotional maladjustment, mental disease, until young people recognize bringing up children as the most fascinating occupation in the world for an intelligent person and one which demands a skill, insight and scientific training second to none. In the hands of the parents lies the mental health of the child and the future adult. Schools and clinics and social workers are but fringes on the outskirts of the great task of parents, the understanding and freeing of human behavior in its beginnings.

### The Training of Parents

(Continued from page 10)

Lecture courses are given to parents by many universities. Boston University, cooperating with the Massachusetts Society of Mental Hygiene, is giving a series of thirteen lectures this fall on "Understanding the Child and His Needs." Cornell University gives short courses for parents. The Universities of Iowa and Utah had special summer courses for parents, who were asked to come with their children. In Iowa the growth of the normal child, the psychology of the pre-school child, and the organization of parent-training groups were studied. "Students will have an opportunity," said the Iowa announcement, "to participate in the physical, social and mental measurement of children." Special lectures in Utah under the Department of Agriculture attracted mothers and fathers from miles away.

There is a growing tendency to give to the undergraduate girl who will no doubt some day become a mother, lessons in child-management and child care. Experiments are being tried out in high schools to this end,—notably in the Junior High Schools in Oakland, California, where day nurseries have been opened under the supervision of the public school system. In these nurseries the students learn the care of young children. In New York City girls in the eighth grade home economics classes have practical experience in child care with the children of the kindergarten, since they prepare meals for the undernourished and give the children baths in the small apartment where they do their practice work. The girls in

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### The Training of Parents

(Continued from page 13)

the high school at Highland Park, Mich., have a course in child care, practising in an experimental nursery school established in cooperation with the Merrill-Palmer School.

In their undergraduate work colleges and universities are making a place for the study of child life and mothercraft not only for those who expect to teach or lead study groups, but also for those who expect in the ordinary course of events to become parents and to share the responsibility of a home. Among eastern colleges for women, Vassar has taken the lead along this line by establishing last year a course in euthenics, by which it "recognizes the vocation of motherhood and deems it worthy of scientific research." The chairman of the Trustees Committee on Euthenics goes on to say that the "unintelligent handling of children makes for delinquency." This, however, expresses only one of the motives at the bottom of the widespread movement for the education of fathers and mothers.

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